NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

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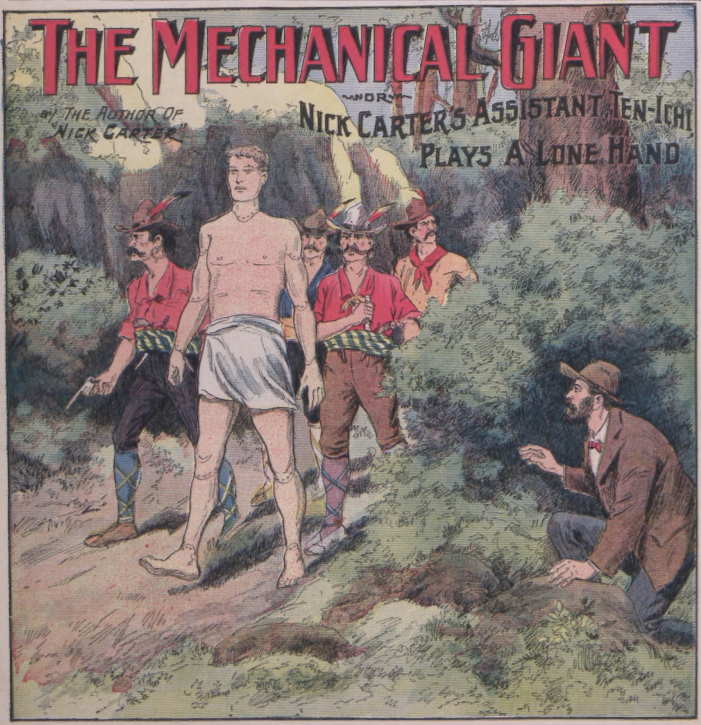
No. 516 NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 17, 1906. Price, Five Cents

THE MECHANICAL GIANT

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NICK CARTER"

OR NICK CARTER'S ASSISTANT TEN-ICHI PLAYS A LONE HAND



Shaw was startled almost out of his senses to see the figure of a huge giant slowly approaching, followed by four swarthy Sicilians in their native costume.

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The Mechanical Giant;

OR,

Nick Carter's Assistant, Ten-Ichi, Plays a Lone Hand.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

TEN-ICHI'S FIRST PLAY TO WIN.

Patsy, one of Nick Carter's assistants, had a bullet wound in his shoulder, and was laid up rather indefinitely for repairs at the Morgantown Inn, in the wildest section of Westchester County, for the great Doctor Stag, who had attended him, insisted that he should not be moved for another ten days or two weeks.

Ten-Ichi had been left in charge of him by the detective, and Cephas Shaw, the proprietor of the inn, had readily consented to give his own personal attention to the wounded assistant, also.

Those who have read the three Nick Carter stories preceding this one will recall the circumstances which led up to Patsy's wound—the pursuit, the capture, the escape, and finally the supposed death of Doctor Codman, the poisoner.

They will recall, also, that strange and remarkable mechanical giant, the product of the poisoner's skill, which had so mysteriously disappeared, and which was supposed to be hidden away somewhere in the forest near Morgantown.

The poisoner himself, relentlessly pursued by Nick Carter, had finally leaped from a cliff into a supposed bottomless pool, and there was no doubt in the mind of any person that he was dead.

But there remained the mechanical giant—that strange and perfect model of a man, eight feet in height; and Ten-Ichi had craved permission of his chief, and had secured it, to seek the monster and find it, if possible, during the time he remained in charge of Patsy.

So, we find the two together in Patsy's room at the inn on the morning of the seventeenth of June.

Patsy was, of course, in bed, swathed in bandages, and under strict orders not to move more than was absolutely necessary; but Patsy was always a lusty youth, and if he was physically unable to leave his bed, he was mentally and personally as bright as ever, and his spirit was as undaunted as it always was.

Ten-Ichi was seated in a chair near the window, and

they were discussing the conditions by which they were encompassed.

"Look here, Ten-Ichi," said Patsy, by way of opening the conversation, "I know just exactly what's on your mind, and I want to tell you right now that I'm all right. You don't have to stay here in the hotel and wait upon me as if I were a baby. I know that you want to get out there in the woods and find that giant; eh?"

"I certainly do, Pat," was the reply.

"Well, I'm all right. I don't need any attention. Shaw will come into the room every once in the while to see if I want anything. I can use my right arm to hold a book. I can read until I get tired, and when I get tired I can sleep. And there's a bell on the table that I can reach if I happen to want anybody."

"All the same, Pat——"

"All the same I want you to finish your smoke and then go about your business for the rest of the day. I only wish I could go with you."

"Of course you do, old chap. I know that."

"Well, don't you see? If you go, I can lie here and figure out just about what you are doing with yourself, for I have been all over the ground, and so I'll know about where you are most of the time; and then, when you come back here along toward night, you can tell me all about it. It will be something to look forward to."

"That's so, Patsy."

"And I can help you, too, a little, if I am laid out here like a dead one."

"Sure you can."

"Two heads are better than one, and when you come back from your trips, we can lay out the plans for what you will do the next day. I honestly think, Ten Ichi, that such a plan will help me to get well a whole lot more than if you settled down here with me from morning till night. We would get awfully tired of each other before that ten days was gone."

"Maybe so."

"I know it."

"Maybe I ought not to go *right* away," said Ten-Ichi. "Perhaps I should wait at least until to-morrow."

"Nonsense! What's the matter with your starting out right now?"

"Nothing, if you don't mind."

"*Mind!* It's what I *want* you to do."

"That settles it, then. I'll go."

"Of course you will. Now you go right down-stairs and tell Cephas Shaw what you and I have decided about it, and tell him that he had better look in upon me every once in awhile. Then get yourself ready for your work; but before you go run in upon me again, will you?"

"Sure."

"I want to say one thing, Ten-Ichi."

"Say it, Patsy."

"If I were in your place I would figure out some sort of an easy disguise for this work. Not that I have any particular doubts about the death of Codman; but he is a perfect devil, as you know."

"I guess I know it!"

"He has fooled us all so many times that it would not surprise me at all if he turned up again even after that dive he took from the top of the cliff into the pool that they call Hell's Broth."

"I am with you in that, Pat; I don't believe at all that he is dead."

"I think we are about agreed on that, then. He probably knew what he was about when he took that leap."

"That's what I think."

"And so it is more than likely that he'll turn up again, and that very soon."

"Exactly."

"And that is why I think you should adopt a good disguise."

"I understand."

"You must not forget, too, that he is a perfect devil at penetrating disguises."

"I'm not likely to do that."

"I suppose you can find your way back to that cavern, where he had you and Chick confined, can't you?"

"Sure thing."

"I think if I were you that I would make a thorough exploration of that place."

"That is the very first thing I intend to do."

"The chief said that there were several entrances to the cavern."

"We knew of two; and doubtless there are more, Pat."

"And if Codman did get out of Hell's Broth, he is no doubt back there in that cave."

"Likely enough."

"And it would naturally be the very place where he would have hidden away the mechanical giant, wouldn't it?"

"I don't think so," replied Ten-Ichi, shaking his head.

"No? Why not?"

"I don't think that he had time to take it there."

"Maybe not."

"I think he has concealed it somewhere in the woods near where we lost it—and him."

"Possibly. Anyhow, the cave is where he would naturally hide himself."

"Yes; I think that."

"And now there is another thing, Ten-Ichi."

"What is it, Pat?"

"Do you remember what the chief told us about Codman's remarks to him and Shaw when the doctor supposed them to be two Italian laborers?"

"Yes."

"About his desire to organize a band of thieves? Banditti, he called them?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's my opinion that if he's alive, that is about what he'll be up to now."

"By Jove, Patsy, I believe you are right. I had not thought seriously about that."

"It is worth thinking about, all the same."

"It certainly is."

"And he'll stick to the dago idea, too. The chief's disguise gave him a hunch on that particular point."

"I haven't a doubt of it."

"I guess that is about all that I can think of for the present, Ten-Ichi."

"All right. Then I'll be getting ready."

"Have you thought out any idea for a disguise yet?"

"No; but I'll come in here to see you before I leave."

"Sure thing. If you don't, I'll send Shaw after you to bring you back."

"And you really think that you can get along without me all right, do you?"

"Of course I can."

"This is the first work that I have had all alone for some time, Patsy."

"Yes; and I want to see you win out with it, too."

"I'll win out if it is a possible thing to do so."

"I know you will. I only wish that I could help you."

"Help me! Don't you know that you are helping me? You can lie there and plan and think, and when I come in to see you, we can put our heads together, and get ready for the next day. It will really be that we are working together."

"Bully for you, Ten-Ichi! Now skip, and fix yourself up. Only don't forget that there is one thing that you have got to look out for rather carefully."

"What is that?"

"Your eyes. Don't forget that they slant just a little, after the manner of your race."

"Oh, I won't forget that."

It was half an hour later when Ten-Ichi returned to the room, and Patsy uttered an exclamation of delight as soon as he observed him.

"You'll do!" he said. "That is fine!"

Ten-Ichi had so altered his appearance that now he looked exactly as if he were a young farmer boy who might belong to any one of the families who resided around that neighborhood, and he had so perfectly carried out every detail of the disguise that it would not occur to a person to suspect anything else.

In addition to all this, he wore a belt around his waist into which was thrust a short-handled hatchet, while across his shoulders was slung a greasy-looking canvas bag.

"Shaw supplied this," he said, touching it.

"What is it for?" asked Patsy.

"Why, to carry the gensing in. I am a gensing hunter. I have seen considerable of it growing around here, and it won't be long before I have my bag half-filled. After that, I will not search for any more. I'll look for the giant."

CHAPTER II.

THE DEATH-TRAP.

When Ten-Ichi left the inn he did not follow the highway, but at once took to the forest path, which led him in the direction of the cavern already referred to.

After traversing the path for about a mile he left it, and followed a course directly to the north, which eventually brought him out upon a ledge of rocks directly above a deep ravine—or, more properly speaking, a glen—and it was a mile farther up this glen where the cavern was located.

Here, underneath this ledge above the glen, was located the ruins of a cabin which Doctor Codman had once used as a forest headquarters, and it was here where Nick Carter and Cephas Shaw had once narrowly escaped being burned to death by the wily poisoner.

Ten-Ichi had been busy during his trip through the woods, and he already had his canvas bag half-filled with the roots of the gensing, so he was prepared now to reply to any and all questions that might be asked of him should he chance to encounter anybody.

It was not here—in fact, it was nowhere near here at all—that he supposed the mechanical giant had been hidden away; but he believed it was necessary to make a thorough exploration of the cavern before he took up the search for the giant in earnest.

He had provided himself with one of those wonderfully powerful pocket electric search-lights used by Nick Carter so frequently—one of which, in fact, he was never without—and he had half a dozen extra batteries in his pockets, so he knew that he would not be at loss for illumination at any time.

And he had also concealed about his person everything which his foresight could suggest as of probable or possible utility in his venture.

He had even taken the precaution to conceal several small files and a pair of nippers in his clothing, for he remembered that but for the fortunate discovery of a lost file by Chick when they were last there, he as well as his chief and both the other assistants would all be dead now.

He also carried two small packages of powders of which he alone knew the secret; a secret which he had brought with him from Japan, and which he was sworn by oath to the Samauri never to reveal.

Again, in his sleeves, he carried two of those small revolvers which worked on spiral springs in the use of which he had become almost as expert as the detective himself.

And so he was thoroughly armed and prepared for whatever might happen.

He seated himself upon a fallen tree at the top of the ledge of rocks, and deftly rolled himself a cigarette—for Ten-Ichi was the only member of the detective's family who used them; and then while he puffed away upon it, between the bars of a tune he was softly whistling, he thought out the next step in his search.

He remembered that there was a high waterfall, half a mile up the glen, where the water came tumbling from the top of a cliff fifty feet above; and where the cliffs on either side of the falls were fully a hundred feet in height.

It was beyond this waterfall where the cavern was located; but the place had been scaled by means of a rope ladder, fastened at the top; and Ten-Ichi was now endeavoring to decide whether it would be better for him to go straight up the glen and to trust to finding the rope ladder still in place, or to skirt the falls by making a detour around them through the woods.

He knew that if Codman were indeed dead, the rope ladder would doubtless be still in position near the falls; while if he were alive—if he had escaped the dangers of Hell's Broth—he would probably have removed it before now.

"I want to search around those ruins down there, anyhow," he mused to himself, "and so I think I will chance it by going up the glen."

He threw away the stump of his cigarette, got upon his feet, and descended the path to the rocky floor of the glen; and presently he came out in front of the ruins of the log cabin which Codman had burned, believing that Nick Carter and Cephas Shaw were prisoners inside.

Ten-Ichi was regarding the ruins idly enough, when suddenly he uttered a low exclamation, and stepped quickly forward.

Some ashes had fallen in a heap directly in front of what had once been the door to the cabin, and a soft rain that had fallen for a few moments only during the night had rendered them impressionable.

Directly in the middle of this heap of ashes was a footprint.

It was not an ordinary footprint, either, for it represented a naked foot of enormous proportions—the foot of a giant, in fact; and it was this that had startled him.

There it was, as large as life, and as plain as day, to make use of rather a trite expression; and it could only have been imprinted there by one thing—by the foot of the mechanical giant.

It seemed to have been freshly made, too.

Indeed, when Ten-Ichi stopped to think upon it, he knew that the foot which made it must have been put there since daylight that very morning; for had not the rain fallen during the night, and had not the impression been made since the rain?

Ten-Ichi glanced quickly and apprehensively around him.

He no longer cared to whistle, for it might be that at that moment somebody was within hearing.

"The footprint tells me many things," he murmured to himself. "It tells me that I will have no need of searching in the forest below the highway, for the place where the giant was concealed—*but more than all else it tells me that Codman is alive, and that he has again possessed himself of his pet invention.*"

He hurried back quickly until he was among some alders a short distance from the cabin, and there he seated himself to do some more thinking.

"It is certain," he told himself, "that Codman escaped from the fury of Hell's Broth. It is also reasonably certain that, having recovered possession of his giant, he has returned with it to the cavern above the falls."

For the information of the reader, it should be again explained here that the mechanical giant was operated simply by the presence of a man inside of it.

Made of aluminum, it was not at all heavy, although it must have been weighted at the feet.

But it was jointed so perfectly that a man inside who knew how to operate it to advantage could make rapid progress, and could assume every outward appearance of human action.

"Nobody but Codman himself could have known where the giant was hidden, and therefore nobody but Codman could have found it, and brought it more than two miles through the woods to this spot where it left a print of one of its massive feet."

This was what Ten-Ichi said to himself, and he added:

"Shall I follow along up the glen, or shall I go around the falls, through the woods?"

For a moment he was undecided; and then again he mused:

"If he has climbed over the falls by the rope ladder, he has without doubt drawn it up after him, and so I would only have to come back here anyway.

"Again, if he should happen to be coming this way and I should meet him, there would be no place where I could conceal myself, and he would discover me.

"Now, I have no wish to encounter him just yet, for many reasons, so it is plain that my best course will be to make a detour through the woods, or at least to follow along the top of the cliff."

Taking particular care to leave no footprints of his own which might be discovered, he returned to the top of the cliff, and started at once along the edge of it to carry out his plan.

It was rather a long and hazardous climb, but at last he stopped upon another ledge of rocks directly above the

falls, and, creeping forward on his belly, he looked down into the depths below him.

But when he peered over the edge of the cliff, he drew back instantly, and uttered a low whistle.

"By Jove!" he muttered. "It is lucky that I didn't decide to go up the glen."

Then he turned, and, having cut a bough of balsam, he used it as a screen, and again looked down into the abyss below him.

Doctor Codman was standing there at the edge of the pool under the falls, idly engaged in lighting a cigar.

It was Codman; in proper person, too.

He had made no attempt at disguising himself, for he still wore his pointed black beard, and he was dressed as Ten-Ichi had seen him last in the city—that is, in the height of fashion.

"One thing is quite certain," Ten-Ichi told himself. "The doctor has had time to take the giant to the cavern and conceal it, and now he has something else in mind. He has returned this far, and he has stopped now to figure out the rest of his journey—wherever he be intending to go."

Codman seemed in no hurry to move.

Indeed, he seated himself upon a rock, and proceeded to smoke his cigar deliberately, almost as if he were awaiting somebody.

"I'd have run right plumb into his arms if I had gone that way," mused the young detective. "And if I had done so, I don't believe my disguise would have done me much good. I wonder what he is up to, anyhow?"

Ten-Ichi could not answer that question, so he remained silent and watched.

The doctor did not change his position until the cigar was consumed and he had thrown the butt away. Then he arose slowly, and approached the rope ladder which dangled from the upper glen near the falls.

This he began to ascend, and Ten-Ichi drew farther back behind his screen as the doctor approached the top.

When he did arrive there, he was still far beneath Ten-Ichi's point of vantage, and was therefore plainly in view; and the Jap watched him eagerly, for he saw in the act some ulterior motive which he was destined soon to understand.

As he watched Codman he gradually became aware of the fact that he had himself narrowly escaped falling into one of the cleverest traps which the doctor had yet set for his enemies.

Having reached the top of the rope ladder, the poisoner moved backward a short distance along the upper glen, and presently he began to roll a huge boulder toward the edge of the precipice.

Having moved it quite near to the edge, he stepped behind it, and with small stones he blocked it up at the rear so that at last Ten-Ichi understood that the slightest jar would send it crashing into the depths below.

Next he unfastened the rope ladder from its present holding, and in a few moments more he had fixed it firmly to the almost tottering rock.

Then he drew back, and Ten-Ichi could see a grim smile on his face as he surveyed the result of his work.

And Ten-Ichi shuddered.

Well he might do so, for he now understood perfectly what the doctor had intended.

The rope ladder still dangled into the lower glen.

From there it would still appear to any person who approached it that it was securely fastened at the top, and Ten-Ichi realized that had he found it so, he would not have hesitated to seize at and attempt to make the ascent.

But—Ten-Ichi shuddered again—had he done so, the slightest pressure of his weight upon the ladder would have dislodged that rock on the cliff above, and it would have come crashing down upon him and crushed him.

It was, indeed, a clever trap, and quite worthy of the sagacious criminal who set it.

CHAPTER III.

THE HERMIT OF THE GLEN.

"And nobody would ever have suspected that it was a trap, either," mused Ten-Ichi. "If two had come here in search of the cavern, both would have been killed; the one who sought to climb the ladder, and the one who waited below, holding and steadying it—and it would, later, when their bodies were found, be supposed to have been an accident."

Codman seemed now perfectly satisfied with his work, and in another instant he had turned away, and disappeared up the glen.

"What is my next move?" Ten-Ichi asked himself.

It was well that he did not answer the question at once, for while he was still turning it over in his mind he heard the sound of approaching footsteps along the top of the cliff, and he hastily threw himself flat upon the ground in the thickest part of the balsam growth behind him.

He was scarcely well concealed when the doctor suddenly appeared within a few yards of him, and walked out upon the very ledge where Ten-Ichi had been lying; and there he remained for a long time, smiling grimly down upon the scene below, and the trap he had so deftly set for the unwary.

Then, to Ten-Ichi's delight, he began to mutter to himself, speaking aloud.

"If any one tries to climb that rope while I am gone," he said, "it will be a sorry business for that particular person.

"But, bah! Nobody will. They all believe that I am dead. They don't know what I do about the pool they call Hell's Broth."

He lighted another cigar absently, and then continued, as if in reply to a question that he had silently asked himself:

"I really suppose I ought to do it. I ought not to visit the city without some sort of disguise; and yet, there is humor in going as I am. There is a relish in defying them all. And since they think me dead, nobody will be expecting me.

"I suppose my picture has been printed in all the papers by this time; but, even so, all their pictures are vile, and I have no fear that anybody would recognize me from having seen one of them.

"Anyhow, I am prepared. If it should be necessary, I could change my appearance so quickly that even Nick Carter would be astonished.

"Nick Carter! I'll get even with that chap. He thinks me dead now, and I've got a clear field ahead of me.

"But first for the other thing! First for my present plans! First for my Italian banditti! Once I get the number of men I want around me, and once I make them understand that I am chief, we can hold these hills and caverns against an army."

He shut his jaws together with a snap, turned on his heel, and strode away through the woods toward the direction from which Ten-Ichi had come.

In a moment he was gone; in another even the sound of his footsteps had died away, and Ten-Ichi knew that he was at last alone.

"If I have luck like this all the way through," he murmured, "I will be, indeed, fortunate. But I can't expect that—quite."

He paused a moment, and then he added:

"I suppose it is my plain duty to light out of here now with all speed, to make my way to the nearest telephone, and call up the chief, and tell him that Codman is alive, and that he has gone to the city to gather recruits for his gang of bandits.

"But, good gracious, just see what an opportunity I would lose if I did that. Codman has gone away. He has left a clear track for me. I can go into that cavern without fear of encountering anybody. I will have at least all day and all the coming night to explore it, and that is too valuable an opportunity to let slip."

He hesitated, nevertheless.

He wondered what the detective would say when he found out that Ten-Ichi might have warned him of the presence of Codman in the city.

But the thirst for the chase was full upon him.

He saw in the present opportunity one which might never occur again, and he was extremely loath to let it escape him.

"Besides," he argued to himself, "I haven't the slightest idea where he is going. He would be in the city long before I could get word to the chief, and it would be a thousand to one that Nick could not find him. I only wish that Codman had said, while he was talking to himself, how long he intended to be absent."

He had risen from his place of concealment, and again approached the edge of the cliff; and now he stood with his back toward the wood, gazing down into the glen absently and unseeingly, for his whole mind was occupied with his problem.

Thus it happened that he did not hear the sound of stealthy footfalls as they approached him from the rear.

But suddenly, by intuitive perception rather than because of any sound that attracted him, he became aware that he was not alone.

He wheeled in his tracks—or sought to do so—but only to find himself seized from behind in a grip that was as powerful as Nick Carter's might have been; so powerful that he could not shake himself loose from it, or even turn to discover who it was who had seized him.

His first thought, of course, was that Codman had returned, and for one instant he believed that his own doom was sealed.

For every second of time that he stood there, held by the strong hands that had seized him—and there were several seconds before the man behind him spoke a word—he believed that the next instant would find him a shattered and crushed mass of flesh upon the rocks in the gulf below.

He tried to turn his head to discover who his assailant was, but the grip was one of iron, and he could not do it.

And at last his captor spoke; and instantly, with the sound of the voice, Ten-Ichi's heart gave a bound, for it was not the voice of Doctor Codman, the poisoner.

"Shall I hurl you to the rocks below?" asked the voice; and, strange to relate, it was a softly melodious voice, at that. Deep and rich, like the voice of a trained actor, and there was not a trace of menace in it. Rather did it have a humorous cadence, as if its owner was enjoying the fright he had visited upon his captive.

"Please don't," replied Ten-Ichi, controlling his own voice as best he could, so that it would not appear that he was too greatly frightened.

"You do not care to die just yet, I take it," said the voice again.

"No. I haven't the least desire in that direction, good sir."

"Who are you, youngster? You will have to tell me that before I decide not to throw you into the glen."

"I am——"

"Be careful now, before you speak. It will be best that you tell me the whole truth, for if you lie to me I may decide to kill you."

"I am——"

"You are not what you seem. I at least know that much. Tell me who you are, and why you are here."

"I have attempted twice to do that, and you have interrupted me each time," replied Ten-Ichi.

"I interrupted you to warn you, for I will brook no lies."

"Very well. I will tell you the truth."

"Do so, and at once, if you please."

"My name is Ten-Ichi. I am a Japanese. I am an assistant detective to the great Nick Carter. I am here on business for him."

"Good! I have heard of Nick Carter. And are you also here in pursuit of that man who was standing where you are now, but a few moments ago?"

"Yes."

"Good again! You have told me the truth. You are safe."

Instead of releasing Ten-Ichi, he lifted him from his feet as if he had been a child, and, having turned him around, set him upon his feet again several feet away from the edge of the precipice. Then he released him.

Ten-Ichi turned instantly to face him, and he nearly gasped in his astonishment at what he saw.

A man considerably more than six feet in height, with hair and beard as white as snow, and so great a quantity of both that only his cheeks, his forehead, his eyes, and his nose were visible.

He wore no hat, and such clothing as he had was the most remarkable that Ten-Ichi had ever seen.

Evidently these consisted of only two garments; a shirt which was open at the throat, and trousers which were fastened to the shirt, or blouse, so that the man was not impeded in his motions by suspenders over his shoulders.

But it was the material of which these strange garments had been constructed which was the most astonishing part of his attire.

They were made of skins, roughly tanned, and sewn together by lacings of the same material—and hundreds of skins must have been required to make them.

Moccasins of the same material covered his feet, and explained at once how he had succeeded in approaching Ten-Ichi so silently.

But despite all this there was a noble dignity of bearing about this strange being which at once impressed the young detective; and his eyes were bright, piercing, intelligent, and kindly.

"You have told me the truth, young man," repeated this remarkable personage. "It is well that you did so, for I despise lies and men who utter them. Sit down. I would converse with you at more length."

"What manner of man is this?" thought Ten-Ichi, as he seated himself upon the rocks; and the stranger, as if divining the thought that was in his mind, replied:

"Who I am does not concern you, my son. What I am concerns you still less. What I have been is no person's business but my own. What I may become God alone can tell. It is sufficient that you are the only human being to whom I have spoken a word in many years. I will not tell you how many. But I find that it is a pleasure. I will tell you more about that anon. When you address me, if you have occasion to use a name to attract my attention, you may call me Brutus. It is as available for use as any, and it will suffice."

"Thank you, sir," replied Ten-Ichi, scarcely knowing what to say.

"I have been observing you," went on the strange man. "You were watching the machinations of that human fiend who left us but now."

"I was."

"To what end?"

"To the end that I may capture him, and send him where he belongs."

"That would be to hell, my son," said the man quietly.

"You are quite right, admitted Ten-Ichi, smiling.

"But, my son, his time is not yet. It is not so written. I have read his fate, and his time is not yet."

"It isn't very far off," said Ten-Ichi grimly.

"No. Did you see him set that trap for those who might come here seeking him?"

"I did."

"It is our duty to destroy it. Come."

"Thank you."

"And after that I will take you—no matter where just now, but you will be interested."

CHAPTER IV.

THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN.

They descended by a well-defined path from the top of the cliffs to the upper glen, and there, after detaching the rope ladder from the rock, the man who called himself Brutus sent the boulder crashing upon the rocks below, after which he made the ladder fast again as it had been before Codman set his trap.

"We will leave it there for the present," he said. "I heard the man say that he would not return immediately."

"He has gone to New York," said Ten-Ichi. "I heard him say as much when he was talking to himself."

"Aye; and so did I, young man. New York is an evil place and it draws him,"

"He is going there to raise a company of banditti," said Ten-Ichi.

"Banditti, did you say, young sir? Aha! 'And now by all the gods at once, upon what doth this, our Cæsar feed, that he hath grown so great?'"

"Eh?" exclaimed Ten-Ichi, somewhat puzzled.

"I was but quoting, young sir, from my favorite poet. There was a time once when I could repeat from memory almost every line within the covers of his great work; but now, alas, my old brain has become befogged. It

is not as it once was, good sir. 'There is something rotten in the state of Denmark,' I fear."

Ten-Ichi forebore to ask questions of his strange companion, although he was greatly tempted to do so; but he correctly conjectured that if he were patient the old man would eventually tell him all he desired to know; so he waited.

"You were seeking the cavern, young sir?" demanded the old man suddenly, turning to the young assistant.

"Yes," he replied.

"Then follow me. In truth, Cassius, these hills are honeycombed with caverns, and their devious windings have become as familiar to me as the alphabet is to you. I make my home among them; you shall be my guest."

"I am afraid that I have not much time to be anybody's guest," said Ten-Ichi, following the old man, nevertheless; "but for the present and until we become better acquainted, I will glady accept your hospitality. You live quite alone, I suppose?"

"Aye, alone. It has been so for many years. Hast heard of men who are called hermits?"

"Yes."

"I am such a one."

"But why?" asked Ten-Ichi.

For an instant he feared that he had displeased the old man, for a heavy frown gathered upon his brow, his hands clenched and unclenched themselves, and he stood quite still for several moments in moody silence.

But he shook the gloom from him much as a dog would shake water from his coat, and with a smile in his eyes he turned again to Ten-Ichi.

"One word of admonition let me give to you, Cassius," he said. "I know that your name is not Cassius, and yet it pleases me to address you so. Ask me no questions, lest perchance you hit upon one that offends me. And if I speak strangely at times, I prithee do not think me a madman. Though I wander, I return. Now, come!"

"Whither, Brutus?" asked Ten-Ichi, striving almost in vain to keep his face straight, but determined to humor this strange being; and he was rewarded for his effort by the glad smile which spread over the old man's face.

"I observe," he said, "that in the kindness of your young heart, you seek to please an old man's whim, and also that there is no spirit of mockery in your desire. I thank you. We go to the cavern. Come."

The old man started rapidly up the glen, and after a distance he turned aside into a much smaller ravine, and walked on until presently he stopped beneath the outstretched limb of a huge beech-tree."

"Cassius," he said, "I fear that you could not reach yonder limb, but it is by that way we must go."

"I think I might do it," replied Ten-Ichi, studying the distance.

"It is very far above your head, good sir. Come hither, and I will lift you to it."

"Rather let me try it," said Ten-Ichi. Then taking the old man by the arm, he drew him back two paces, and said:

"If you will stand here, with your back toward me, I will try."

"Be it so, then. Proceed."

He stood in the spot indicated by Ten-Ichi and waited patiently; and Ten-Ichi backed away to a safe distance. Then, running quickly forward, he leaped into the air, and then, with a sudden pressure of his hands upon his companion's shoulders, he gave himself a second impetus by which he seized the limb, threw himself around it, and by the time the old man had raised his eyes, he was seated astride of it, laughing gaily.

The old man laughed with him, heartily.

"In truth, you are a lad of sorts," he murmured; and then, with a light spring into the air, surprising in one of his years and weight, he, too, caught the limb and swung himself as deftly upon it as Ten-Ichi had done.

"Now to the trunk of the tree," he said; "and thence, by another spreading branch, to the bank beyond."

"And after that——?" asked Ten-Ichi.

"After that, the cavern. We will be almost at the entrance of one of the ways inside."

"An entrance unknown to Codman?" asked Ten-Ichi.

"Is he so named? Codman, eh? I will not forget it. Yes, Cassius, an entrance that is unknown to the human fiend."

They passed to the bank and ascended it to the top, and a few steps farther on the old man placed his shoulder against a huge rock, and by pressing against it moved it so that a well-like hole was revealed beneath it.

Stepping to the edge he lowered himself into the hole until his head was level with the top, and then, reaching up his arms, he said:

"Come, Cassius."

He took Ten-Ichi in his arms as if he were a babe, lifted him gently, and placed him on his feet beside himself.

"Now wait," he said; and in another moment he had moved the rock back into place so that they were in absolute darkness.

"Your hand, Cassius," he said then; and, grasping it, he led the young detective along through black darkness, at first descending, then ascending, now turning this way, and now another, and at last coming to a standstill.

"Stand there one moment;" he directed; and presently Ten-Ichi saw the glimmer of a light across the cavern, and heard the sharp click of flint against steel.

After being for a considerable time in utter darkness, the faintest sort of light seems brilliant, and so it was now.

Although the old man had lighted only two insignificant flames, the contrast with the impenetrable darkness of a moment before made it seem like an illumination.

They were in a lofty and extensive chamber of the cavern, and as Ten-Ichi glanced around him, he realized at once that he was standing in the home of the strange old man.

It was provided, too, with a quantity of roughly made furniture—such as its owner had been able to fashion with his own hands.

In one corner there was a comfortable looking bedstead with coverings made of tanned hides of squirrels and rabbits, and no doubt other animals as well.

A rug of the same material was on the floor near it. There were chairs and a table, and in another corner a desk surmounted by a bookcase and the latter was supplied with quite a number of books.

In the center of the cavernous chamber was a very old-fashioned cook-stove—one of the kind that has the oven on top at the back; now almost forgotten, but in use fifty years ago.

Ten-Ichi took all these things in at a glance while the old man observed him closely.

"Behold my castle," he said. "It is my monarchy—my home. It has been my home for many years. It will be my home until I pass away from earthly things. You are welcome to it."

"Thank you," replied Ten-Ichi simply.

The old man smiled down upon him from his great height.

"I like you," he said, with simple directness. "You have brought joy to me. You will come again to visit me after the business that brings you here now is done?"

"If I may, I will be glad to do so."

"And now, good Cassius, how long have you fasted?"

"Long enough to be as hungry as a bear," was the instant reply.

"Good! We will prepare something to eat. Fortunately I happen to be well provided at the present time, although I fear you will find my fare but poor. It will be different from what you are accustomed to."

"It will be good, I know," replied Ten-Ichi.

The old man set about the preparation of the meal at once, talking while he worked.

"It is many years since I came here to live," he said; "since I cut myself loose from the world, from all things of the past, from friends and foes alike, from books and from the things and the pleasures I best enjoyed; and since that time I have rarely conversed with human beings at all."

Ten-Ichi made no comment, and after a moment he continued:

"You would ask me why, and I will tell you."

"Not unless it is your pleasure to do so," interrupted Ten-Ichi. "I assure you that I have no vulgar curiosity. It is enough for me that you are a man, and have been my very good friend."

"Quite so. I understand. Thank you. Know, then, that I came here when I first became aware that my brain was not performing its accustomed duty; that is, it was not doing it in the right way. In a word, my young sir, I was rapidly losing my reason, and, in truth, for a time I believe that I was quite mad. But, unlike other madmen, I realized it, and I bent all my energies to effecting my own cure."

He paused and sighed; then he continued:

"In part I have succeeded; but not entirely. I know that if I should return to the world, and to the haunts of men, my troubles would return. In a short time I would lose all the reason that God has seen fit to leave to me now, and after awhile I would be placed in an asylum for the insane, where I would fret my life away.

"But here—here I live alone with God and nature. I live near to nature's heart. I have a garden, where I raise my vegetables—the seeds for which, in the beginning, I am afraid I purloined in the night from near-by farmers. But God forgave me for that since I did not, in fact, injure them. Squirrels and partridges, pigeons and hares provide me with the meat I have need of. An old salt lick, where the deer used to go, gives me salt. For matches I have flint and steel, and carefully preserved tinder from rotting logs.

"But wherefore shall I tell you all these affairs of mine? It is enough that I have all that a man should require to live well and happily, and that without other effort than my own to produce it.

"There is a living spring of ice-cold water in yon corner of this cavernous room; and here in this place it is always cool in the summer, and always warm in the winter.

"Now, good Cassius, draw your chair to the table, and let us eat after I have asked a blessing upon our repast."

"Does this cavern connect with the one occupied by Codman?" asked Ten-Ichi.

"It does. And presently I will show you how; as well as many other things."

"You do not relish the fact that such a man is near you, Brutus," said Ten-Ichi.

"No. I want no man near me: least of all, that human fiend."

CHAPTER V.

THE MYSTERY OF "HELL'S BROTH."

"May I ask you some questions about him?" asked Ten-Ichi.

"All that it may please you to ask, though I doubt me if I can reply to them all."

"Tell me when it was that you first saw him."

"About one year ago. I used to sit and watch him while he was building his log cabin in the lower glen."

"Did he build it without assistance?"

"Quite so. He is a man of great physical strength.

Almost as great as my own—and yet he is not half so strongly built."

"Have you ever spoken to him?"

"God forbid! Never."

"Nor had the inclination to do so?"

"Once I had it, but I withstood it. I felt instinctively that he was not a good man. Now I know that I was right."

"He must have been a long time in the building of that cabin if he had no assistance."

"He occupied the entire summer."

"And did he visit it often?"

"Aye, frequently. Sometimes once a week; sometimes oftener."

"And when did he discover the properties of those [illegible] and flames? When did he discover the cavern?"

"I think, Cassius, that he had previous knowledge of these places. He seemed not to discover them; he seemed to know that they were here."

"How?"

"I do not know. Possibly he divined them."

"Do you believe in that sort of divination?"

"Frankly, I do not."

"How, then, could Codman have known about the cavern?"

"Possibly in his travels he has met somebody who did know. That is how I found them. Aye; from the father of the present landlord of the Morgantown Inn."

"Did Codman Shaw know of your presence here?" asked Tan Ichi, in surprise.

"So man knows that but yourself, and I know that you will keep my secret from all men."

"That will I; but I beg your permission to tell it to my chief, and that you will some day let me bring him to see you."

"Nick Carter?"

"Yes."

"I will think about it. Before we part I will let you know my decision."

"And now to return to Codman."

"Yes."

"Do you know what sort of work he did in his cabin, down there in the glen?"

"No; save that he was very secret about it."

"You know nothing, then, about the product of his labors?"

"Nothing."

"He is a physician of great skill. He is a toxicologist; a master in the art of making poisons. And now he has become a professor in prevention."

"Aye. I know that he used a microscope."

"How did you know that?"

"I saw it myself; one night by the light of a fire. I had gone to the top of the ledge above the cavern to enjoy the quiet of the night. I saw the reflection of the blaze, and I thought it must be the cabin."

"And you visited the scene of the fire?"

"Yes. I went there, but when I arrived the fire had nearly spent itself. However, I was in time to see that fiend throw the dead body of a negro into the blazing pile, and I knew then what manner of man he was."

"I wonder that you did not seize him, and throw him in after the negro."

"It was, indeed, my impulse, but I controlled it; and I hastened away at once."

"You did not see any other persons there at that time?"

"No; were there others?"

"Yes. Nick Carter and Cephas Shaw were concealed among the alders in front of the cabin."

"Did they see him murder the negro?"

"No. He was already dead when they found him. But Codman's reason for firing the cabin was because he supposed he had them imprisoned inside of it."

"And he sought to burn them alive?"

"Yes; and believed that he had done so."

"If I had known that at the time——"

"He would have perished. No?"

"Aye, like the fiend he is."

Tan Ichi was silent for a moment, and then he asked:

"Do you know of a deep and mysterious pool of water in these hills, which is called by the name of Hell's Broth?"

The hermit smiled.

"Aye, that I do," he replied. "And it is well named. It is one of the mysteries of these hills that I intended to show to you; but it seems that you already know about it."

"I know nothing about it, save that it exists. I have never seen it."

"So?"

"Can a man dive into the waters of Hell's Broth, and come out alive? But I know it is possible, since Codman lives."

"It *is* possible. I have done it many times, and I still live; but I did not know that the secret was known to the fiend."

"He escaped from Nick Carter by that means only two days ago."

"Aye; it is possible; but you shall be made aware of its secrets also, my son."

"Thank you. Now, have you ever seen a giant in these hills?"

"A giant? We do not live in Bible times, Cassius."

"No. Then you have seen no giant?"

"I have not."

"There is one. It belongs to Codman. It is a mere mechanical giant, of course, but so perfectly [illegible] that it looks quite human."

"And I suppose," said the old man, with a smile,

"that it talks and walks and does other things as if it were human?"

"It walks. It does not talk that I have heard."

"And how is it that the giant can walk?"

"Because there is a man inside it to operate its mechanism."

"Ah! The fiend?"

"Precisely."

"And what is it for?"

"To frighten the credulous, I suppose."

The old man chuckled.

"Had you not told me of it I, too, might have been frightened," he said.

"I doubt that, sir. You are not one who is easily dismayed."

"No. I was ever overstrong, both in self-reliance and in muscle. The strength that God gave to me is very great. That was one of my reasons for fleeing from my kind when I felt that my reason was leaving me. I was afraid that I would crush somebody in these hands of mine if I could no longer control myself."

"But your mind is not affected. It is as clear as it could be."

"Aye; here in these hills it is. But there—*no;* I would not dare return."

Ten-Ichi leaned forward, and fixed his eyes intently upon the old man.

"Will you aid me in the capture of Codman?" he asked.

"That will I, and with the greatest of pleasure."

"When he returns, I believe he will bring others with him."

"Other men like himself?"

"Other men, certainly. Italians, probably. Men with whom he will organize his banditti; I have already spoken about it."

"Yes; I remember."

"He has gone after them. I heard him say as much when he was talking to himself."

"Then we will capture them all; only do not ask me to kill. I—I must not do that."

"I only wish to capture them."

"We will do that. I will help you."

They had been eating while they talked, and now Ten-Ichi pushed back his chair and rose to his feet.

"It was a capital meal," he said. "And now shall we visit the other parts of the cavern, Brutus?"

"Aye, Cassius, that will we do. But first I must tell you——"

"Yes."

"It was ever a fancy of mine to find a Cassius; hence I called you so. In my early life I was a student of Shakespeare, and also a tragedian. 'All the world's a stage, and men but players.' I think in some ways I am still a player. It is the only part of the world I long for now. The footlights. The sea of faces in front of me. The music of the orchestra. The applause. *Ah!*"

"You miss it even yet?"

"Woefully. And yet now I am much too old to think about it. Come."

"To the cavern?"

"Yes. To the cavern and to Hell's Broth. Do you feel in the mood for a bath?"

"That is a perpetual mood with me."

"Good. You shall have one—in Hell's Broth."

"It doesn't sound inviting."

"And yet it is so—fascinating, when once you have tried it."

"My chief told me that Codman dived into it from a height of sixty feet."

"From the top of the cliff? I have done it often—when I have been in haste to get to this place."

"To this place? Does it connect with the cavern?"

"With one part of the cavern; and from there it is a simple matter to reach the other parts if one knows the way. I will show you."

"I have been told that many men have lost their lives there," said Ten-Ichi.

"Nay, nay. It is not so. No man could lose his life there, for he is thrown out of it again almost as soon as he is submerged; and, moreover, no man who knows about it and does not know its secret, dares to go near enough to it to fall in. Some have thrown bits of wood into it, and have seen them disappear, and so they think that there is no bottom and no giving up of its victims. But it is a merciful pool, though frightful to look upon."

"How did you discover its secret?"

"In a strange manner. I slipped and fell into it."

"And thought you were lost?"

"I was saved ere I had time to think about it. You will understand when you have tried it, but no man could fittingly explain it to you."

"Shall we go now?"

"Yes. You are not afraid to trust yourself to me?"

"Afraid. No. I am ready."

"Then come, my son. We will have a day of it; and to me it will be one of the pleasantest days of my life."

And so they set out together through the winding galleries of the cavern.

CHAPTER VI.

TEN-ICHI'S VENTURESOME TEST.

When they had traveled a considerable distance and had just passed through a gallery so low that even Ten-Ichi was obliged to bend almost double in passing and the old man dropped to his hands and knees, they came to a desolate place where not the faintest suggestion of daylight filtered through to them from somewhere at the top.

Here the old man turned, and said:

"I do not know the mystery of that wonderful light you carry with you, but by its aid you will soon be able to understand in one moment what it took me many hours to comprehend."

The chamber where they stood was very large; so large that Ten-Ichi could not see to the opposite side of it even with his light.

When they entered it, all was as silent as the tomb; as silent as the cavern had been all the time since they entered it; but now, as they stood there for a moment, Ten-Ichi was suddenly startled by a rushing, roaring sound which filled the place as if with the groaning of a thousand beasts in pain.

In spite of himself he seized the arm of the old man in a firm grasp; but recovering himself instantly he called out:

"What is it? What is it?"

The hermit leaned down to him and replied:

"It is the moaning of the waters. We are at the vent of the caldron in which Hell's Broth is prepared. Come."

He conducted Ten-Ichi across the strange chamber until they seemed to arrive at the end of the platform of rock, for directly in front of them was a deep and apparently bottomless chasm from which the roaring proceeded, but which seemed now to be dying away.

"Throw your light downward," said the old man laconically. "Then tell me what you see."

Ten-Ichi obeyed; and then he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

Directly beneath him at a distance of approximately [illegible] feet was a wide platform of rock, and farther below [illegible], receding rapidly into a well-like hole, were the black and swirling waters of a pool.

While Ten-Ichi looked on in amazement, the water sank into the hole until it almost disappeared from view, and until the moaning sound almost ceased; and then as suddenly it began to rise again, while the noise increased proportionately.

It rose rapidly until it reached and covered the platform of rock to a depth of two feet, and then with a harsh and a roar the entire volume seemed to fly to the side of the well, after which it again receded as it had done before.

And Ten-Ichi stood there and watched it in silence while this operation was repeated several times over; and he counted the time.

"It is as regular as the ticking of a clock," he said to the hermit.

"Aye; so it is."

"Tell me about it," asked the young detective.

"Beyond that partition of rock yonder," replied the old man, "lies the well-hole of Hell's Broth as you see it from the cliff where the fiend jumped into it. It rises and sinks with methodical precision, and it swirls and twists as if it were stirred by a giant's hand. When it sinks to a certain level, it hesitates for a moment, and then the force of the water draws whatever it may contain into this adjoining well-hole.

"It rises almost instantly, and the force of the current being still tending to the same direction, that body, be it man, or log of wood, is cast upon that shelving rock that is directly below you, and is deposited there; and from there, as you will observe if you throw your light yonder, there are steps to ascend to this safe place."

"But how do you explain it?" asked Ten-Ichi, breathlessly.

"I do not try. It is one of the wonders of the Almighty. But there is no doubt that there is an underground river of great volume below us, and that in some manner nature has placed there an arrangement not unlike our automatic tanks, which fill and empty themselves.

"Let us say that it is a huge boulder of soft stone which the water has worn into the shape of a ball which holds itself in place and stops the opening through which the water escapes until the pressure becomes so great that the rock itself is lifted to release it.

"Then the water rushes out through the opening until the pressure is released so that the rock drops into place again and the well fills up. Then the pressure is repeated and the waters are released; and so on with perfect regularity.

"Nothing can withstand the pressure of water when confined by weight; but it is as impossible for a man to drown by falling or leaping into the pool beyond that partition of rock as it is impossible for you to drown while standing where you are. The hand of God lifts you out and deposits you there on that platform, from whence you climb up here to safety."

"It is wonderful!" said Ten-Ichi.

"Aye: all things are wonderful, only that we cease to wonder when amazement gives place to familiarity. Hast seen enough?"

"Yes."

"Come, then."

The hermit crossed to still another part of the cavernous chamber and led the way into a dark hole where they ascended a very steep gallery, and to Ten-Ichi's amazement they presently emerged upon a ledge of rock that was directly opposite the cliff from which Codman had dived into the pool.

Nor was it so high, being not more than twenty feet above the swirling water.

"Leave your clothing here if you would keep it dry," said the hermit. "Do not make the leap until the water rises to that jutting piece of rock on the opposite side. When it does that the next time follow me."

He had thrown off his own meager clothing while he

talked, and now, as he ceased, he suddenly dived into the depths below him.

Ten-Ichi shuddered in spite of himself, but determined not to be outdone, he lost no time in throwing off his clothes; and then, when the water rose again to the point the hermit had indicated, he made the leap.

It seemed to him, when he struck the water, as if a thousand pairs of giant hands had seized upon him; he knew that he was absolutely helpless in the power that held him and sucked him down as if he were made of lead.

But he kept his wits about him, and counted "one, two, three," etc., until just as he reached eighteen, which would be approximately eight or nine seconds, he found himself deposited gently upon a rocky bed, and felt the grasp of the hermit fall softly upon him.

"Come," said the old man; and he led Ten-Ichi to the chamber above them, where only a few moments before they had stood together, looking at the strange pool.

"Did you enjoy your bath?" the hermit asked.

"Yes," replied Ten-Ichi; "and I was surprised to find that the water is warm."

"Aye; almost tepid. I doubt not that it is the pressure that makes it so. Wait here; I will fetch your clothing."

As soon as they were dressed again, the old man led Ten-Ichi away through still another gallery.

"We will go now to that part of the cavern where the fiend makes his home," he said. "I refer to him constantly as 'The Fiend,' because that is the relation he bears to humanity, to my mind; and methinks 'tis a fitting [illegible]."

"Quite so," assented Ten-Ichi. "I think we will be wise if we keep in mind the trap he set for me back there at the falls."

"Why?" asked the hermit.

"Because it is more than likely that he has set others here in the cavern."

"I had not thought of it, but you are right."

They had not traveled far before Ten-Ichi discovered that they were in that part of the cavern where he and Nick had been prisoners for a time on one occasion; he recognized the very chamber where he had been chained to the rocky floor with an iron collar around his neck.

He explained what had happened there to his companion,* and he spent some time in searching the place, finding nothing, however, that was of the slightest interest to him.

After a little they passed on to the second chamber, and that one Ten-Ichi recognized as the place where Nick Carter and Cephas Shaw had been confined on that same occasion.

As he explained to the hermit, but drew forth only the remark:

"I have kept myself away from this part of the cavern, fearing that I might kill the man you are seeking; otherwise I would have discovered and released you all myself."

This chamber was evidently the living-room in the cave, of Doctor Codman, for it had been made more or less comfortable for habitation.

Ten-Ichi pointed with his finger, and said:

"Yonder, not far away, lies the entrance by which we came into the cavern when I was here before."

"Aye; it is what might be called the main entrance."

"And there is still another one there;" and Ten-Ichi pointed in exactly the opposite direction.

"Yes. It is at the top of the hill, not very far from Hell's Broth."

"It was by that route that Codman escaped us and dived into the pool."

"Yes; no doubt it was what he intended to do when he started. He wished you to believe that he was dead."

"Now," said Ten Ichi, "I have an idea."

"What is it, my son?"

"That at each of those two entrances, Codman has fixed up other traps to catch any one who might attempt to enter by them."

"It is not unlikely."

"Shall we investigate?"

"No; rather let us avoid them. If there are traps there it is not unlikely that the man may be hoist by his own petard. I have heard of people being caught in their own traps; have not you?"

"Yes."

"Have you examined all you wish to examine here?"

"Not quite. I want to find that mechanical giant. How long would it require for us to make a thorough search of the entire cavern?"

The hermit smiled indulgently.

"My son," he said, "I have lived here for years, and as yet I have not examined all of it. There are many miles of corridors and galleries here. We might not accomplish what you ask in a lifetime. My advice would be to leave it until the return of the fiend, and then no doubt he will discover it for us and we can capture both together."

The young detective acquiesced, but not without some reluctance; and so presently they made their way back to the hermit's chamber.

"There seems to be nothing more for us to do now, but to await the return of Codman," he said to the old man, as he seated himself on one of the rudely made chairs. "Would you mind if I should leave you and return to the hotel? I have a friend there who is wounded, and who will be anxious if I do not show up to-night;" and he explained to the hermit all about Paris.

"No," replied the old man. "Go, by all means; but do not stay the night. I will go with you to the edge of

the wood near the hotel. I will wait there until you rejoin me, and then we will return here. I have found so much pleasure in your company, Cassius, that I am loath to part with you. Shall it be as I say?"

"Yes; let us start at once."

"Aye; and when we return, we will set a trap for the fiend and his followers. Come, then, let us be off."

And they left the cavern by the way they entered it.

CHAPTER VII.

A MYSTERIOUS MIDNIGHT VISITOR.

It was two hours after dark when Ten-Ichi arrived at the inn, and went at once to Patsy's room; and as simply as possible he related the events of the day, from the moment of his departure until his return.

"The old man has given me permission to tell you and Chick and the chief about him, provided we keep the knowledge of his existence to ourselves," he explained. "And, really, I believe we ought to do so. He is really half-mad, and it is only his strength of will and his method of living that keeps him from becoming quite so. He has succeeded in making that perfectly plain to me."

"How long do you expect that Codman will be away?" asked Patsy.

"There is no telling that. He will return as soon as he was accomplished his purpose in going; I don't think he will return until he has done so."

"Well, Ten-Ichi, there is one thing which it is your plain duty to do."

"Telephone to the chief?"

"Yes."

"I will do it at once;" and he rose and went immediately to the telephone.

He was some time in obtaining the desired connection, but at last he recognized Nick Carter's voice at the phone, and then, as he had related it to Patsy, he told all that had occurred to him that day.

"I am not surprised that Codman has managed to escape again," was the detective's comment. "He seems to have as many lives as a cat; but the fact that you have yourself passed safely through Hell's Broth, explains it all. I think that Chick and I had better come up in the morning and help you out," he added.

"I was afraid you would do that," said Ten-Ichi.

The detective laughed.

"You wish to do all the capturing yourself, I see," he said.

"Yes; I wanted to."

"Don't you think, Ten-Ichi, that there is rather too much at stake?"

"Yes. You are right, chief."

"It isn't likely that Codman will go back there before to-morrow night, we had, so I will not intrude upon you before the morning after that. I will see to-morrow in endeavoring to get some trace of him here in the city; but on the following morning I will be with you."

"All right," agreed Ten-Ichi.

"How is Patsy?" asked the detective.

"Very much better."

"Good. See that he keeps perfectly quiet. Good-by."

Ten-Ichi returned to Patsy somewhat disgruntled.

"It is just as I knew it would be," he growled. "The chief is coming up here himself."

"Well," said Patsy logically, "he is the chief, isn't he?"

"Sure thing."

"And I suppose he has the right to do as he pleases. You will get the credit for it just the same."

"It isn't the credit for it that I want."

"What is it, then?"

"It is the pleasure of *doing* it."

"Oh! Well, then, go ahead, and do it before he gets here."

"I can't do it very well until the man I am to catch returns, can I?"

"N-no; but perhaps he will return sooner than you suppose. It is my opinion that he will do that very thing."

"I only hope he will."

"Now, Ten-Ichi, if you are going back to the cavern to-night, with that old man of the mountain, it strikes me that you had better be about it. He is waiting, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"Then get along. I will go to sleep."

"By the way, Pat, the chief told me to tell you, as an order, that you were to keep very quiet."

"Well, gee whiz! ain't I doing it?"

"I suppose so."

"If you half-realized how much I want to be out—— Oh, get out, will you? Skip! or I will throw something at you. You are having all the fun, and I can do nothing but lie here and swear at the ceiling."

And so the two assistants parted, laughing, for neither of them was one half as disgruntled as he tried to make it appear.

And outside at the edge of the wood Ten-Ichi found the old man awaiting him patiently.

"Cassius," he said, when Ten-Ichi joined him, "my solitary life has made my instincts more keen than they would otherwise have been. At times it is given to me to see visions; to receive warnings of coming events; to have premonitions of things that are to happen. While you were at the inn I have received such a one."

Ten-Ichi did not take the remark seriously, but nevertheless he asked:

"What was it?"

"It was that some kind of immediate danger threatens your wounded friend who lies there at the inn."

"Patsy?"

"I believe that is what you call him."

"What danger could threaten him now?"

"I do not know. I did not see so clearly as that. But there is a danger."

"Nonsense, my friend."

"I wish, my lad, that you would heed the warning I have given you," said the hermit earnestly.

"And how shall I heed it?"

"By returning there for a moment and transmitting the warning to Cephas Shaw. Tell him what you will, so long as you do not tell him of me. Bid him keep extra watch and ward over your friend this night; that is all."

"But what could threaten Patsy?"

"The return of the fiend might menace his safety, my son."

"Do you mean that possibly, knowing Patsy is there, he might venture to enter the inn at night, and do him harm?"

"That is precisely my meaning. It is what I fear."

"Very well; wait here."

Ten-Ichi was off like a shot, and he speedily found Shaw, the landlord.

"Mr. Shaw," he said, "an idea has occurred to me that possibly Codman may return to-night."

"All the better. You will nab him the quicker."

"There is no doubt that he knows of Patsy's presence under your roof."

"It is more than likely that he knows about it by this time."

"Suppose he should try to harm Patsy?"

"Eh?"

"Suppose he should try to break into your house to-night and attack——"

"Bosh! But, if he should, he would get a bullet into him; I can tell you that."

"Will you be extra careful to-night, Shaw?"

"To be sure I will."

"I'll tell you what I wish you would do."

"What is that?"

"I wish you would sleep on the cot in Patsy's room to-night. I will feel easier if you will do that."

"All right, Ten-Ichi. I'll do it if you wish, although I do not myself think there is any need of it."

"But you will sleep there with him?"

"Yes."

"Thank you. Good night."

* * * * * * *

And now we must be permitted one short digression from the direct thread of this story.

Shortly after midnight that same night, clouds began to gather, and before one o'clock a light rain was falling.

The night itself was intensely dark; so dark that even if Cephas Shaw had been keeping open-eyed watch on the front porch, instead of sleeping soundly and quietly there on the cot in Patsy's room, it is doubtful if he would have seen the shadowy figures of five men as they came swiftly along the highway toward the inn, and at last came to a pause beneath the roof of the porch.

Then one of them detached himself from the others, after a whispered conference, and crept silently and swiftly toward the front door of the house.

There he paused only for a moment, during which he busied himself with the lock of the door; and presently he pushed the door silently ajar, and passed inside the house.

A few moments later he stopped before a second door, on the upper floor, and with a pair of burglar's forceps he gently turned the key that was in the lock on the opposite side.

That done, he opened the door without a sound and entered the room.

He might have been a spirit for all the sound he made as he crept stealthily toward the sleeping landlord on the couch, and held an uncorked vial beneath his nostrils so that Shaw might inhale the fumes.

Then after a moment he left him, and passed to the bedside, where he applied the same methods to the sleeping Patsy—and with the same result; that of putting him into a profound slumber.

Nevertheless, he still worked quietly, if expeditiously; but he wrapped Patsy securely in the bedclothing, after which he gently and firmly raised him in his arms, carried him from the room, paused long enough outside to relock the door by the same method he had employed in unlocking it, and then with his burden he descended the stairs and passed out upon the porch.

Here again he relocked the outer door, and that done, with Patsy still in his arms, he led the way into the darkness of the night again, followed by his four companions.

Cephas Shaw did not awaken until daylight, and even then he did not for a time discover that he was alone in the room.

He stirred uneasily two or three times, and at last opened his eyes widely and sat up.

Presently his glance wandered toward the bed, and instantly he uttered an exclamation of astonishment, and leaped to his feet.

The bed was empty. Patsy had disappeared.

Shaw made one jump to the door and seized it; but only to discover that it was still securely fastened, and that the key was on the inside of the lock.

Mystified, he turned it, and rushed down the stairs to the front door.

That, also, was locked, and the key was inside the door.

"What in the world does it mean?" he asked himself.

He unlocked the door, and rushed outside; but the rain was now falling heavily, and it had entirely obliterated all traces of the midnight visitors—if, indeed, they had left any.

"Ten-Ichi was right, after all," he muttered. "Codman

has been here, and he has carried Patsy away, probably to his death, or to hold him as a hostage in order to make terms with Nick Carter. But how in the world did he do it?"

He looked around him as if he expected the falling rain to make reply.

But none came, and after a moment of hesitation, Shaw darted away from the house without informing anybody of his intention; and he took the path through the woods which would take him as directly as possible to the cavern in the hills.

He felt that he must find Ten-Ichi at once, and tell him what had happened.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STRANGE GIANT APPEARS.

It will be remembered that Ten-Ichi had said nothing at all to Shaw concerning the old man of the hills, who lived the life of a hermit among them. But as events turned out it was developed that he had always known of the strange old man, although he had never told a soul of his knowledge.

Shaw knew, also, many of the secrets of those hills which he had roamed as a boy, and although many years had passed since he had gone much among them, his memory was excellent.

His desire now was to find Ten-Ichi, if possible, without running afoul of Codman, and so, instead of taking to the glen when he had passed the falls where Ten-Ichi first encountered the old man, he kept to the woods, skirting it.

The reader will remember that it was not far above the falls where the old man had turned from the glen proper into a smaller ravine; and presently Shaw espied it.

He hesitated for a moment, wondering if that were the route he should take, and then as he was about to cross the glen and explore it at least, he was startled almost out of his senses to see the figure of a huge giant lead approaching him down the glen.

He had heard enough about the mechanical giant not to be frightened at its appearance, but, nevertheless, he could not avoid a shudder when he saw it approaching him.

It was more than eight feet tall, and magnificently proportioned.

Made from aluminum, it had been afterward covered with a jeweled suit, which, in turn, was hardened through plating, so that in effect it looked exactly like a huge and naked human being, whose only garment consisted of a breech-cloth around the loins.

It strode toward him with all the grace and perfection of motion of a man, too; and directly behind it walked four dark and swarthy individuals who were unmistakably Italians.

But they were not the Italians Shaw had seen that day by day about the streets of New York and in the country districts surrounding the city.

They were garbed in the native costumes of the mountaineers of Sicily; in a word, they were dressed as bandits should be dressed, according to the tales we have heard and read about.

It was evident that Codman, in securing their services, had appealed to their vanity as well as to their cupidity, for here were the cocked hats, the parti-colored costumes, the red-and-blue sashes, with their quota of pistols and knives.

In truth, it seemed to the watching landlord of the inn that a company of Italian, or, to be more correct, Sicilian bandits had been transported bodily from their native heath directly to these hills.

Shaw was unarmed. It was, perhaps, fortunate that he was, too, for he felt strongly the inclination to take a shot at them, when, upon feeling for a weapon, he remembered that he had left the inn without once thinking of his possible needs.

But he drew back among the trees, and dropped to the ground, while he watched them pass on down the glen; and from his place of concealment he could see them place the rope ladder in position and one by one disappear over the brow of the cliff.

"Ought I to follow them, or should I go ahead with what I started out to do?" he asked himself.

But the answer was obvious. It was his duty to go ahead.

"One does not know how many more men Codman has brought back with him," he thought. "If I knew that, I could determine whether it would be safe for me to go directly to the cave. As it is, I had better stick to my first idea and seek Ten Ichi."

If he had known that those four men comprised Codman's entire band he would have gone directly to the cave, but, as it was, he crossed the glen, and hurried along the lesser ravine by which we have already seen the old man and Ten-Ichi pass.

He reached the tree from which the limb projected—that one which Ten-Ichi had succeeded in grasping by practising a sort of leap-frog jump and pause; but after he had gone a few steps farther he halted, and, placing his hands to his mouth like a trumpet, he called out:

"Ten-Ichi! O-o-oh! Ten-Ichi!"

He waited, and after a little he repeated the call; and then he was suddenly startled almost out of his senses by

hearing his own name pronounced almost directly behind him.

Shaw wheeled in his track, only to discover that Ten-Ichi was standing there as calmly and as smilingly as if he had been there all the time.

"Where in blazes did you drop from?" he demanded of the young detective.

Ten-Ichi pointed toward the limb of the tree over his head.

"From there," he replied. "What is the matter, Shaw?"

"The matter is that Patsy has been carried off," was the instant reply.

"What is that? Carried off, did you say?"

"Bodily."

"When?"

"Last night."

"How? Where were you?"

"I was there, on the cot, as I promised you I would be; but as to how it was done, I'm blessed if I know. When I waked up, the door was still locked on the inside, and so was the front door of the house. I suppose it was Codman who did it, though I can't for the life of me understand how it was accomplished."

"I know," said Ten-Ichi.

"Tell me how, then."

"He opened the two doors with a pair of burglar's forceps, with which you can easily turn a key that is on the opposite side of a door. Then he must have drugged you; and then he simply relocked the doors after he had taken Patsy outside."

"I just met the giant," said Shaw, suddenly remembering what he had seen in the glen.

"What's that?"

"I said you."

"Where?"

"Down in the glen. He had four Italians with him. They have gone down the glen, but I can't imagine what for."

"I can."

"What, then?"

"They have gone to begin operations in the business they came here to do."

"Eh? What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that when you return to your inn you will hear that somebody has been held up on the highway and robbed. An automobile party, or a carriage, or something of the sort. I suppose that Codman's new-found bandits were impatient to do something to get their hands in, and so he has taken them at once to the high way. It looks to me as if it were a good opportunity for us to visit his cavern and rescue Patsy before they return."

"There might be a dozen other men there, for all we know."

"Hardly that. He would not need so many for his bandit purposes. Four or five would be sufficient. I doubt if we shall find more than one or two there. You had better—— "

"Hold on, Ten-Ichi. I don't know what you were about to say, but whatever it was, I am going with you."

Ten-Ichi hesitated, and Shaw continued:

"I know why you hesitate. It is because of the old man."

"How did you know—— " began Ten-Ichi, but Shaw again interrupted.

"I have always known," he said. "He has been here years; since my father kept the inn; but I have respected his wish to be left to himself. I have never told anybody. Now, however, I would like to see him."

"Then, Cephas, my son, you shall see him," came a voice from among the trees above them; and an instant later the old man also grasped the projecting limb and swung himself down until he stood before them.

He stretched out his hand and grasped Shaw's.

"Right glad am I to see you, and to speak with you," he said calmly. "I did not know that you were aware of my presence here; but I overheard what you have just said. I thank you."

"I followed the instructions of my father," said Shaw.

"And I have no doubt that it is you who has from time to time placed certain things of necessity where I could find them, and make use of them; things which I believed the Lord, in His infinite mercy, had provided. Aye, and He did provide them, my son, using you as His instrument. Through you, Cephas, I thank Him. Amen."

"Mr.—— " began Shaw; but the old man held up a warning hand.

"Name me no names," he said softly. "My own belongs to that past which in mercy hath been left behind me. Now, what is this about the young man who is wounded?"

Shaw repeated all that he had already told to Ten-Ichi, and the old man listened intently.

Then he said:

"The voice that spoke to me last night while I waited for Cassius near the edge of the wood, admonishing me that a calamity was about to befall, spoke truly as it always does. But I doubt not that the young man is well cared for. We must not forget that his captor is an experienced and a skilled physician."

"And a poisoner," said Ten-Ichi. "We are wasting time."

"Be not in too great haste, Cassius. I doubt not that Patsy, as you call him, is taken as a hostage, for the making of terms with Codman's enemies."

"That is precisely my idea," said Shaw.

"If that is true, the fiend would not injure him—not at once."

"Possibly not," admitted Ten-Ichi; "but, all the same, I wouldn't trust him as far as I could sling a bull by the tail."

"Come, Cassius. We will search for him at once, then."

He seized Ten-Ichi in his arms, and tossed him up so that he could grasp the limb of the tree; and, having done that, he performed the same service for Shaw, handling each of them as if they were feathers in his grasp, so that Ten-Ichi exclaimed:

"What a giant in strength you are, sir!"

"Aye; God gave it to me. I can bend a crowbar together as if it were a willow withe. It was because of that great strength that I fled to the hills when I felt that my reason was leaving me."

"My father told me as much," said Shaw.

"Your father, Cephas, was my best friend always. Come."

They passed into the cavern by the same route where we have already seen him conduct the young detective, and presently they all came to a halt in the chamber where he made his home.

"Now, my friends," said the old man, pointing at the table, on which there was food, "if you will permit it for a space I will take command."

"Well?" asked Ten-Ichi.

"I bid you, therefore, to remain here and eat while I go alone through the cavern."

"But——" said Ten-Ichi, and stopped. The old man was not listening.

"It is enough," he said.

"What?" asked Ten-Ichi.

"I know of devious ways through these galleries. I can travel them much more swiftly if I go alone. No man—no five men can stand against my strength if I am attacked. I will return as soon as may be, and I will bring with me the young man."

"But——" began Ten-Ichi again.

"Cassius, I pray you permit me to have my will in this."

"If you are attacked, sir, we would like to be near to assist you."

"Later, when we capture the fiend and his men, you shall be, lest I kill them all in my fury. Now it is better that I should go alone. Wait here, my sons."

He turned away without another word, and was gone, gliding away like a ghost.

And Ten-Ichi and Shaw waited together in the cavern for his return, forgetting to eat, as he had bidden them.

CHAPTER IX.

A SCENE OF TERROR.

Five minutes passed, and then suddenly Ten-Ichi started to his feet.

"I can't stand this," he said emphatically. "I am going to follow Brutus."

"Follow who?"

"Brutus. That is what he calls himself. It is the only name I can use in referring to the old man."

"Do you know your way through these caverns?"

"I have been through once already, to the part where Codman holds out; I think I can do it again."

"All right."

"Will you come with me?"

"Yes; if you think it is best. But won't the old man resent it?"

"I don't think so. What difference does it make if he does?"

"None, I suppose."

"What is the use in our sitting here like a pair of idiots, anyhow? That isn't what I came here to do."

"Of course not."

"Come on, then."

Ten-Ichi led the way, and he followed the same tortuous gallery through which the hermit had conducted him the preceding day; or at least Ten-Ichi supposed that he did so.

But by some accident, which will never be explained,

...e managed to branch off from it somewhere until suddenly and without warning he put his feet upon a steep and slippery incline where the gallery made an abrupt descent.

Instantly his feet shot from under him, and he slid forward like a shot out of a gun.

He managed to shout a word of warning to his companion, but it came too late, and so it was that the two of them went gliding down that steep place as if they were tobogganing.

They went a long way, too, before they came to a stop, to find themselves in a sort of a pocket in the cavern; in just the sort of a place that would be called a slump if it were located in a mine.

They stood in water up to their ankles, and from the appearance of the walls around them it looked as if there were times when the water rose higher so that it might almost fill the place.

Ten-Ichi could judge of these things for the reason that he had not loosed his hold upon his electric light.

"This is a pretty kettle of fish," he remarked ruefully to Shaw. "One would think that the place where we slid down was made of glass. I wonder if we could climb back the way we came."

"I doubt it," said Shaw. "However, we can make the effort."

And they made the effort; not once, but many times, and each trial met with utter failure.

It was utterly impossible to secure any sort of foothold upon the slippery rocks, and the angle was very steep.

Despairing of their efforts in that direction, Ten-Ichi moved his light here and there around the pocket in which they were imprisoned, until at last, about ten feet over their heads, they discovered a small hole in the rock.

It looked barely large enough to admit of the passage of a man, but it offered a hope, and Ten-Ichi at once seized upon it.

"Let me climb upon your shoulders, Shaw," he said. "From there I can reach the hole, and then if I find that it is a possible way out of this fix, I can pull you up to it with the aid of my coat."

The suggestion was at once carried into practise, and having climbed into the hole it did not take Ten-Ichi long to discover that it was another of the maze of galleries with which those hills were honeycombed.

He at once removed his coat, and then, lying at full-length with his head out of the hole, he lowered it for Shaw to seize upon; and five minutes later they were both out of the slumplike pocket into which they had fallen.

"We will go a little more carefully this time," said Ten-Ichi, again leading the way. "The trouble is that I haven't the least idea where we are."

"You didn't have any before, did you?" asked Shaw.

"Not much, as it proved, although I didn't know that I was wrong; but we will find a way out of this predicament somehow."

"Sure."

Their way now led upward, and the climb was steep; but it was sufficiently rough so that they could obtain a fairly good foothold.

But they went up, and up, and up until at last Ten-Ichi stopped for breath, and remarked:

"One would suppose that we should be nearly to the top of the mountain by this time."

After resting for a few moments, they went on again, still ascending, until at last they came to a wide, open space that was directly in front of them; and they halted upon a shelf of rock which at first glance seemed to jut out over a bottomless abyss.

And the very instant of their arrival they were both startled to hear a wild scream of terror, which echoed and reechoed through the cavern, and which was in the unmistakable voice of a woman—or a girl.

Instantly Ten-Ichi released his pressure upon the button of his light, and began to creep forward, for already he had noticed that the edge of the shelf of rock was only a few feet in advance of where he stood.

"What was that?" demanded Shaw.

"Wait," replied Ten-Ichi.

But Shaw did not wait.

Instead, he also crawled forward, and so it happened that both peered over the edge of the shelf at the same instant on the scene below them.

Ten-Ichi discovered instantly that he was gazing down into a dome-shaped chamber that he had never seen before; it was larger and loftier than any that had been shown to him; but, while he took in these facts at a glance, it was not that part of it which interested him now.

There were half a dozen lamps fixed to the walls below them, each provided with a reflector which was

turned toward the scene now being enacted in the very center of the chamber.

And there, indeed, a curious sight met their gaze.

Doctor Codman was lying upon the floor of the cavern tightly bound hand and foot, and standing near him, wringing her hands together in agonized terror, was a young girl, not out of her teens evidently; and Ten-Ichi knew at once that it was she who had screamed.

He had not long to wait in order to understand why she had uttered that scream, for she was soon to have reason to repeat it.

The four gaudily garbed Italians whom Shaw had seen in the glen were gathered around a roughly made rustic table near at hand, and one of them held a dice-box in his hand.

It was evident that whatever game they were playing, it had only just begun, and that only one of their number had as yet thrown the dice.

They were talking together in their own language, and gesticulating excitedly, and their voices came plainly to the ears of Ten-Ichi and Shaw.

"What are they talking about?" asked Shaw, in a whisper.

"They are rafiling," replied Ten-Ichi grimly.

"Raffling for what?"

"For two things at once," replied the young detective. "They have decided that they do not care about serving under Codman, so one of them has knocked him on the head, and they have bound him and laid him where you see him. It seems that they have held up an automobile on the highway and after robbing it they brought away the girl to hold her for ransom."

"The scoundrels!"

"And now, Shaw, they have decided that they do not wish to hold her for ransom. They are raffling to determine, with one throw, which of them shall be chief; and to the chief will also belong the girl."

"Great Heaven!"

Ten-Ichi was about to speak again, but at that moment the man who held the dice-cup in his hand wheeled and faced the terror-stricken girl, and, laughing loudly, he shouted out a few words in his own language.

At the same instant he seized the poor, frightened girl in his arms, and he would have carried his repulsive face against hers had it not been that at that instant a rifle-shot rang out with startling distinctness through the cavern.

It was Ten-Ichi who had fired—not at the man who held the girl, for he was afraid that he would [illegible] but at random, scarcely heeding where the bullet went.

The effect was instant and prodigious.

The Italians leaped apart from one another, and looked wildly around them, for, owing to the formation of the cavern, it was impossible to tell from what direction the shot had come. And while they stood there, now terrorized on their own account, Ten-Ichi fired again, and brought one of them to the floor howling, with a bullet in his knee.

And now a surprising thing happened, and it can only be explained by supposing that the first bullet fired by Ten-Ichi must have cut the cords which bound Codman's feet together, and that he must already have succeeded in liberating his hands.

At all events, he leaped to his feet.

The Italians saw him, and each of the three who remained uninjured sprang toward him at the same instant and with one impulse. It was evident that they believed that Codman had fired the shots at them.

They surrounded him; they seized upon him, and Codman was having the fight of his life, when suddenly out of the blacker darkness at one side of the cavernous chamber there leaped the weirdly, white-whiskered, gigantic figure of the old hermit.

The girl who had been the innocent cause of all this trouble was standing like one in a trance, and with her hands clasped together was watching the terrible scene, when she was suddenly seized from behind, a hand was placed over her mouth so that she could not cry out, and the next instant she was borne away into the darkness in the strong arms of the hermit.

"I wish that Brutus had stopped long enough to play handball with that crowd," remarked Ten-Ichi grimly.

"Why don't you shoot into the bunch of them?" asked Shaw. "Give me one of your guns and I will do it."

"No," replied Ten-Ichi. "That would be too much like murder."

"Murder to kill jackals like them!" sniffed Shaw contemptuously.

"Wait," said Ten-Ichi. "I'll give them a surprise-party. I'm a pretty good shot. I'll see if I can hit those lamps."

The fight was still going on furiously, and Codman seemed to be a match for them all; but Ten-Ichi did not stop to consider that.

He raised his revolver and began firing rapidly with

that snap-shot motion for which Nick Carter and each of his assistants are famed.

Following each shot there came the sound of crashing glass, and one by one the lights went out as his bullets struck the lamps.

With the very first shot the Italians attempted to break away and escape; and then, as they continued, the men made redoubled effort to do so.

During a time that might have been occupied in counting ten, the shots continued, and then the last one of the lamps was hit, and the cavern was left in total darkness.

But notwithstanding that fact the fight below them still continued. Ten-Ichi could determine that much by the sounds that still ascended to him, and he smiled grimly as he said to Shaw:

"I shouldn't wonder if Codman licked the whole bunch. But, anyhow, the girl is safe, and the old man must have rescued Patsy by this time. Let us see now if we can find our way back to his quarters."

CHAPTER X.

THE DEAD MEN IN THE CAVE.

It was, of course, quite evident to Ten-Ichi that they could not hope to return to the hermit's cavern by the way they had come, and it was *not* plain that there was any route at all by which they *could* return.

"There isn't any doubt about the fact that we are lost in this cavern," he said to Shaw. "I don't suppose you know anything about it, do you?"

"Not a thing."

"This shelf seems to skirt around the top of the dome here; suppose we follow it? We may find another hole in the rocks, and if we do we will follow it."

"All right. Go ahead. You've got the light."

The shelf of rock already referred to several times was not more than six feet in width, and it became perceptibly narrower as they traversed it; but at last, when they had made half the circuit of the dome, they came to another opening in the rocks, this time a much larger one than that from which they had come, and, entering it boldly, Ten-Ichi was rejoiced to find that it led them downward, and that it was high enough and wide enough so that they could walk upright.

Presently, after descending a considerable distance, they came to a level gallery, and this carried them nearly a quarter of a mile in a straight line.

"It looks as if we were going directly into the heart of the hills," Ten-Ichi said to Shaw, after they had traveled together in silence for a long time. And he was about to add more to the remark, but he stopped suddenly with a low exclamation of astonishment, for directly in front of them, exactly as if it had loomed out of the ground at their feet, a huge figure started up.

But he was instantly reassured, for the deep, melodious voice of the hermit addressed him.

"I was going in search of you, my sons," he said. "Tell me how it is that you found your way to the gallery of the hall of echoes?"

"If that is what you have named the place, it is well named," replied Ten-Ichi. "To tell you the truth, we didn't *find* our way there, at all; we *lost* our way there."

The old man chuckled.

"I guessed as much," he said. "You were not content to remain where I left you, until my return."

"I simply could not do it," admitted Ten-Ichi. "I was too impatient, sir."

"Ah, well. There is no harm done."

"We saw you rescue the girl," said Ten-Ichi. "And Patsy! Did you find him?"

"Yes. I found him."

"And you have taken him to your own cavern? To your own part of the cavern?"

"No; I left him where I found him."

"How is that?" demanded Ten-Ichi.

"I feared that to move him at this time might cost his life, my son. He is feverish; he is very ill. Already he has been carried by his captors to this place, and in the condition of his wound that was a precarious thing to do at best; and, moreover, he seems to be in the care of a woman who is nursing him tenderly."

"A woman!" said Ten-Ichi.

"Yes."

"Who can she be?"

"I know not. I thought possibly that you might know. She is not a young woman, and she is not prepossessing in her appearance. She has something of the look of that fiend Codman about her, also, and she seemed to be quite at home in this cavern."

"I know," exclaimed Ten-Ichi. "She is Jane Gore. She is Codman's sister."

"I was examining Patsy's wounds," continued the old man, "when I heard her approaching, and I stepped aside in the darkness and waited. After used I watched her for some time without her suspecting that I was near:

and I became satisfied that it was her effort to treat him with kindness, so I left him there—for the present."

"And then——" asked Ten-Ichi.

"Then I started to return here—or rather by this way, to my own part of the cavern, when I was startled by a pistol-shot. I thought that it came from the hall of echoes, and I ran there at once. Doubtless you saw me when I arrived."

"Yes; you were just in time."

"To save the young lady from the insults of those men—yes."

"Where is she now, Brutus?"

"She is safe. I have hidden her away where they cannot find her, and in a place from which she cannot escape, to be lost among these galleries. But I left a light with her, and pinned to the sleeve of her gown I left a note telling her that she had been rescued from the ruffians, that she was in the hands of friends, and that within a few hours she would be returned safely to her people."

"She was unconscious, then, when you left her?"

"Yes. She fainted when I carried her away from the hall of echoes. Doubtless she thought it was one of the Italians who had seized her."

"And now what is to be done?" asked the young detective.

"Tell me first what happened in the hall of echoes after I left it," said the old man. "I heard more pistol-shots; several of them. What happened?"

"I shot out their lights for them."

"And left them in darkness?"

"Yes."

"And what did the men do?"

"They were still fighting when we came away."

"One against three—or four if we count the man who was wounded."

"I think that Codman is quite equal to them," said Ten-Ichi.

"Doubtless. But come. We can do no good by waiting here."

"Where shall we go now?"

"To the hall of echoes, my son."

The hermit turned abruptly as he spoke, and led the way through the corridor in the direction from whence he had come, and presently they came to a rude ladder which was fastened against the rocks.

This they ascended, and presently came out upon a second gallery, and after traversing this for some distance they emerged upon a broader and loftier way; and here the old man made them stop.

"Wait," he said. "The hall of echoes is but a few feet farther on. Wait here until I reconnoiter."

He was absent only a few moments, and when he returned he said:

"Come. I think there is no one there now. There are no sounds. Come."

Ten-Ichi threw on his light again, and in another moment they emerged upon the hall of echoes, the hermit leading the way, while Ten-Ichi threw the light ahead of him.

But suddenly they came to a halt as with one accord.

They had approached the center of the chamber, and lying upon the floor in front of them, in a curious heap as if they had been stricken down by one withering blight, were stretched the four Italians.

"Dead," said the hermit, after examining them attentively for a moment. "Dead; and with no wounds on them, save this one who was shot in the leg by you, my son. How has the fiend killed them?"

"With one of his deadly poisons, probably," replied Ten-Ichi.

"But how? He could not administer it while they were struggling together."

"No; but he could jab them, one by one, with a pin."

"With a pin? Men do not die from the prick of a pin."

"From the prick of some pins they might."

"A pin that has been dipped in poison?"

"Yes."

"We read of such things as having happened in the Middle Ages," said the hermit, "but it is scarcely to be credited that it could have happened here."

"You don't know Codman," returned Ten-Ichi. "He is a poisoner by profession and by inclination. Once he wrote a threatening letter to Nick Carter, in which he said that he could kill him easily in a thousand different ways, and one of the methods he mentioned was the prick of a poisoned pin."

The old man straightened up suddenly.

"It behooves us to be about our duty," he said. "The fiend has for the moment escaped us, and I confess that I am anxious now lest he will do injury to the wounded lad."

"Take us to Patsy as quickly as possible," exclaimed Ten-Ichi. "Codman will know from the shots we fired

that he is no longer alone in this cavern. He will know that we are aware that he did not perish in Hell's Broth. He will murder Patsy now, because he cannot take him away with him."

They left the Italians lying as they found them, and hastened onward through the cavern.

Ten-Ichi offered the old man the light, but he shook his head.

"I do not need it," he said. "I have lived here so long in the darkness that I can find my way perfectly well without the aid of a light. Use it yourself, and follow me."

They no longer walked; they ran.

Down one passageway and up another, now turning to the right and then to the left, and so on and on seemingly interminably until at last they darted into a chamber smaller than the others they had visited in the cavern, and stopped.

Ten-Ichi understood at once, without waiting for the old man to say a word, that this was the place where he had found Patsy, and where Jane Gore had been attending upon him.

But Patsy was no longer there; neither was Jane Gore.

A lamp still burned in its bracket against the wall; the cot where Patsy had been lying was stripped of its clothing, but Patsy was gone.

The chamber itself gave evidence of having been used by a woman; it had evidently been her living-room and sleeping apartment, for there were objects here and there which gave sufficient evidence of that fact.

"Gone!" exclaimed Ten-Ichi. "But where?"

Neither of his companions replied.

Presently the old man laid a hand upon Ten-Ichi's shoulder, and he said calmly:

"My son, we must be patient. If that fiend of a man intended to murder your friend he has already done it and we are too late. If he has not committed the murder yet it is not likely that he intends to do so, and therefore there would be ample time. And my own conviction is that he has not injured your friend."

"Why do you feel like that?" asked Ten-Ichi.

"Because I think if he had intended to kill Patsy he would have done so at once, and have left the body here for us to discover. The fact that the body is not here, that it has been carried away, convinces me that Patsy is unconscious he should succumb to his wounds from exposure, and because of moving him about so many times; and yet, even so, we must not forget that he is in the hands of a physician."

"But what shall we do next? What is best for us to do now? Shall we search the cavern?"

"Nay; it would be both fruitless and useless."

"What, then?"

"We must hasten to the glen outside the cavern. We must go to the brink of the waterfall, and wait there. It is the only way out, and he will have to pass there, if, indeed, he has not already done so."

"You think that possibly he has already escaped?"

"I think it more than likely. Yes."

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRAIL OF THE MOOSEWOOD LEAVES.

By mutual consent they traversed the distance to the hermit's quarters in the cavern in utter silence, and it was not until they found themselves there that any of them uttered a word.

"Now, my son," said the hermit then, "will you permit me to take command for a moment?"

"Willingly. Gladly," replied Ten-Ichi.

"The young lady has not seen me. She does not know that such as I exists, and would prefer that she should not know it."

"I understand, sir."

"Therefore, you and Cephas will go together to the room where I have placed her. You will find it at the end of that short corridor;" and he pointed to one which led off from the chamber where they were standing.

"Well?" said Ten-Ichi, with some impatience.

"You both know the way out of here—the way by which we entered."

"Yes."

"I will hasten on at once. I will go to the brink of the falls, and ascertain if the fiend has passed. If he has not, and he should attempt it while I am there, I will engage to stop him in transit. You comprehend?"

"Yes."

"When you have rescued the young lady from her temporary prison, you will follow me. I will await you there at the falls, and when you approach I will conceal myself so that the young lady will not observe me."

"All right; and then——"

"Then you will accompany Cephas and the young lady as far as the place where the path leads through the

woods to the inn, and there Cephas will leave the young lady in his charge, and you will return to me. Does that plan meet with your favor?"

"Entirely."

"Cephas will then conduct her to the inn, and from there he will communicate with her friends by that new instrument they call a telephone, which must be very powerful. I have never seen one. For the present, that is as far as we can plan ahead."

"Very well. Let us begin at once to carry it out."

Without a word the old man turned away, and with a leap and a bound he was gone; and at once Ten-Ichi and Shaw made their way to the room where the young lady was confined.

There was a bar of wood across the door, and this Ten-Ichi removed.

He found her seated upon a chair which the old man had left there for her to use, and although there were still traces of terror in her face she strove bravely to smile upon them when they entered.

"You—you are—friends?" she asked, in a tone of pathetic doubt.

"Yes," replied Ten-Ichi. "You are entirely safe now, mademoiselle. We have come to return you to your home as speedily as possible."

"I have read the note you pinned to my sleeve," she said, now smiling brightly. "Your name is Ten-Ichi?"

"Yes," admitted the young detective, in surprise.

"It was signed to the note, you know," she explained. "You must have followed me here to rescue me. Oh, how can I ever thank you enough?"

"Please do not try," said Ten-Ichi.

"It was so horrible," she continued. "Those terrible men—bandits, were they not?"

"Would-be bandits, yes. But they will never trouble you again."

"No? Are they prisoners?"

She did not wait for a reply to the question, but continued:

"They were horrible. At first I was told that I was to be held for ransom, and that I would not be harmed in any way; but later, when we entered the cavern, one of them struck down that cruel-looking white man, and then I realized that I was in terrible danger."

"As, indeed, you were."

"I understood Italian. I heard them talking among themselves. I heard them arranging to throw dice to determine which of them should claim me as his property."

"The scoundrels!"

"Then they drew lots to see which of them should make the first throw, and he who won it seized me in his arms and kissed me, despite my resistance. I screamed, but he only laughed.

"Then, when another one was about to make the throw, he attempted to do the same thing, and I screamed out again. The answer to it was a pistol-shot—and after that I do not know what did happen. I think I fainted. When I awoke, I was here, and the note was pinned to my sleeve. I have been waiting since then with great impatience."

"I can imagine so. Will you tell me your name?"

"I am Bertha Malden. I live in Seventy-first Street, New York."

"Thank you. We will go now, if you are ready, Miss Malden."

"I am quite ready. My father will know how to thank you better than I can do it."

"We need no thanks. Come, if you please."

They left the cavern, and presently arrived at the tree whose huge branch extended out over the pathway through the ravine.

Ten-Ichi pointed toward it and said:

"Miss Malden, will you go first? Can you walk out upon that limb, swing yourself from it, and drop to the ground below?"

"Certainly I can," she replied, with a smile on her pretty face. "Watch me."

She accomplished it with all the grace of an athlete, and presently the three of them were hurrying down the ravine toward the glen.

Reaching it, they halted a moment when Ten-Ichi made a reconnoissance, but finding no trace of Codman he motioned to his companions to follow, and so they descended the glen together.

Arrived at the brink of the falls they saw no sign of the hermit, and although Ten-Ichi heartily wished to question him, he did not stop to do so.

They did not go over the falls by way of the ladder which was still in place, but went by the path which ascended over the cliff to the right, and thence on through the woods until they came to the ledge where the path began which led through the forest almost to the back door of Morgantown Inn.

And here Ten-Ichi left them.

"Miss Malden," he said, "it is my duty to leave you here, but Mr. Shaw will take good care of you. He will conduct you to his inn at Morgantown, and from there you can communicate by telephone with your friends in New York. You are quite safe now, believe me. Here, Shaw, take one of my pistols. You might have use for it."

"How can I ever thank you?" asked the girl again.

"As I said before," replied Ten-Ichi, "don't try."

"But won't you tell me who you are? I know only the name Ten-Ichi; and it is a strange name."

"It is my own name, Miss Malden. I am a Japanese. I am also an assistant to the detective Nick Carter."

"Ah! I know of him. My father knows him well."

Ten-Ichi watched them until they were out of sight down the path, and then he turned and retraced his steps rapidly toward the falls where he expected to find the old man awaiting him.

But the hermit was not there.

Ten-Ichi looked about him in alarm; and then, very softly at first, but afterward louder, he called and called again and again.

But he received no reply. If the hermit was within hearing he did not respond.

The young detective could not understand it at all.

He waited awhile, and then called again; and at last he seated himself upon a fallen tree trunk to think it over.

Suddenly, while he sat there, he discovered a place on the tree trunk where the bark had been peeled away, and when he moved nearer to it he found that there was faint writing on the blank space thus made.

"Follow the trail of the torn moosewood leaves," was all the writing told him; but it was in the same old-fashioned and quaint chirography of the note that Miss Malden had shown to him that was written by the old man, and Ten-Ichi had no doubt who had written it.

Moosewood leaves, as everybody knows who has seen them, are very large and very green; they are also several shades darker than the surrounding verdure as a rule; and instantly the young detective was on his feet with his eyes alert, searching for the strange trail.

He discovered it almost at once.

It led directly to the brink of the waterfall—to the rope ladder which still hung in place there, and Ten-Ichi lost no time in descending to the glen below.

Here he succeeded in taking up the trail again, which was plainly to be seen upon the bare rocks which formed the bottom of the glen—or rather its floor.

With his elbows at his sides he ran forward like a bloodhound on the scent until presently, without losing the trail, he arrived at the ruins of the burned cabin.

And here the trail led him up the path to the ledge above the glen, and thence on along the narrow roadway through the forest toward the highway which he knew was rather more than a mile away.

Here the trail was much more difficult to follow, for the torn leaves of moosewood had fallen among and upon other green things, and was therefore sometimes difficult to see.

Ten-Ichi was forced to go very slowly, for although he had no doubt that the trail would lead him directly to the highway, he was not at all sure of it, and he feared the possibility that it might turn aside at some point before the highway was reached.

However, it did not.

It not only conducted him to the highway, but it led him directly across it and into the denser forest on the opposite side of the road.

He paused in some dismay when he discovered that, for he could not determine how he was to follow the trail of moosewood leaves through that dense growth of timber and underbrush.

But it was at once evident that the sagacity of the hermit had foreseen this difficulty.

Ten-Ichi had advanced but a few steps ere he discovered that the old man, instead of scattering the torn leaves upon the ground, had pinned them upon branches as he passed; had fastened them to branches from which he had first stripped the other leaves, so that the trail marks were plainly in view.

The young detective could not understand it at all.

He asked himself over and over again, why had the hermit permitted Codman to pass him at all? Why had he not stopped the prisoner at the falls? Was Codman carrying the wounded Patsy? Was the woman Jane Gore, his sister, with him? Where was the mechanical giant? Was there still another cavernous hiding-place in this forest below the road?

The day had advanced to afternoon now; the sun was settling into the western part of the heavens. In two hours or three it would be dark.

But he kept doggedly on, following as rapidly as it was possible to do, the trail of the torn moosewood leaves.

But at last, after another hour of travel, even this trail gave out, and he came to a halt beside a huge sycamore-tree which stood like a giant among its fellows, and which was almost on the brink of a yawning chasm at his feet.

He was tired and he was angry, and in his temper he struck the trunk of the tree a resounding blow with a stick he had been carrying in his hand.

It gave forth a hollow sound in response to his blow; but that was not all. He had by accident struck the tree exactly in the right spot, and instantly a section of the tree opened before him, and he not only saw that the tree was hollow, but that others had gone that way not long ago. And then, for the first time, he discovered that a torn section of a moosewood leaf was pinned to the bark of the tree an inch or two above the spot where his blow had fallen.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GIANTS OF THE CLIFF.

For a moment Ten-Ichi gazed in amazement upon the secret his blow against the trunk of the tree had disclosed to him; then he smiled grimly.

"Truly," he said to himself, "this man Codman has found wonderful hiding-places. It is right here, inside this tree, no doubt, where he concealed the mechanical giant when we lost all trace of it in these woods. Huh!"

He bent forward and peered into the interior of the hollow tree, and he then back again with a smile when he discovered that there was daylight beneath one-half of it and that he had only to swing himself inside the tree and let himself down quickly a few feet in order to alight upon a wide shelf of rock which ran about along the side of the chasm, just under the knee of the cliff; and directly below him, on that shelf of rock, he saw another half of a leaf of moosewood.

He entered, and let himself down to the rock, nor did he stop to close the opening in the trunk of the tree.

"One would never expect to encounter such mysteries as this one within a short distance of the great city of New York," he told himself; and he glanced to the right and left in search of other leaves in order to determine which direction he should take.

He saw them at once and started on; and the pathway was as perfect as if the hand of man had carved it from the rocks.

It extended along the side of the cliff almost at a level, and Ten-Ichi had followed it a hundred rods or more when it came to an abrupt termination where there was a narrow fissure which extended into the cliff, and here a succession of rustic ladders, one after another, reached from ledge to ledge downward until the last one rested upon the bottom of the glen.

Ten-Ichi was about to swing himself upon the first of these, when something induced him to turn and gaze across the gulch to the opposite side; and he almost cried out at the surprise he felt at what he saw.

Directly opposite him, at about the same height from the bottom, three hundred feet from where he stood, he saw the mechanical giant.

He was passing along a ledge that was not unlike this one, walking with the easy freedom of a human being, naked, save for the strip of cloth around his loins, and frightful to look upon because of his enormous size.

But that was not the most astounding part of the scene to Ten-Ichi, for directly behind the giant was Doctor Codman himself, bearing in his arms the apparently unconscious form of Patsy.

"Can the giant walk alone?" was the amazed question which Ten-Ichi asked himself; and at once he laughed aloud.

"Jane Gore!" he exclaimed. "Codman's sister. He has taught her how to operate the giant. It is she who is inside it now."

He watched the strange procession breathlessly, drawing back against the rocks as far as he could in the hope that he would not be discovered.

And then he saw something more.

Several hundred feet behind them, but upon that same ledge of rock, he saw the tall form of the white-haired hermit.

He was creeping along stealthily in pursuit of Codman, but keeping well back so that he would not be seen should Codman happen to turn his head; and he was tearing and dropping the moosewood leaves as he crept along.

Ten-Ichi watched this scene like one fascinated, and he did not take his eyes from it until the giant and Codman had passed a turn in the glen and so were lost to view.

Then instantly he sprang for the ladders, and he went down them with the agility of a monkey, arriving at the bottom with an expedition that surprised even himself.

And here he discovered more leaves.

They led him directly across the glen to the opposite side where there were other ladders leading upward.

Up and up and up he went until the height made him dizzy and he wondered how a woman, handicapped as Jane Gore was with the weight of the giant, could have accomplished it; and he wondered even more how Codman could have done it with Patsy in his arms.

But he reached the top at last, and started in pursuit of the hermit, knowing that he would soon overtake him.

In this thought he was, however, mistaken, for although he traveled rapidly he saw no one at all.

He reached the turn in the glen around which the giant and Codman had disappeared; and here the ledge led him out upon the top of the cliff over the glen.

There were no longer any torn leaves to follow; it was evident that the hermit's supply had become exhausted.

But Ten-Ichi knew that he could not be far behind his enemy, and he broke into a run.

The way ascended gently and presently passed through a grove of hard pine which extended directly to the edge of the precipice.

He passed through this and out upon a clearing beyond it, and then—he halted suddenly, amazed at what he saw on the ground before him.

"Patsy!" he cried out.

But Patsy was beyond replying.

He was unconscious or dead, Ten-Ichi could not at once determine which; but beside him was another form, rudely bound with leather thongs such as the hermit made for his own uses.

And this other person was a woman—Jane Gore.

She was quite conscious, and she looked up at Ten-Ichi with a bitter smile on her strong but somewhat repulsive face.

"I guess this is about the last act of the play, my friend," she said calmly!

Ten-Ichi did not at once reply. He was bending over Patsy; but after a moment he arose.

"Is he dead?" he asked, pointing at the silent form.

"No: far from it. He is not even injured, and he will be none the worse for his experiences."

"Can you assure me of that?"

"Yes."

"How came you here, as I find you?"

"I was inside the giant, bringing it here for my brother," she explained. "We stopped here to change. He took the giant, and I was to carry the boy. He went on, and I found I could not lift the young detective. I was tired out; so I sat down here to await the return of my brother. Then a man who has the strength of ten men seized me from behind. He left me here as you see me. He has gone on. That is all I know."

Ten-Ichi waited to hear no more.

He started away on a run; and so he passed through another grove of pines, and came out upon the base of a long point of rocky cliff which extended out over the chasm until it reached half-way to the other side.

And here he halted, almost paralyzed by what he saw before him.

Away out, at the utmost extremity of the rocky point, the mechanical giant and the white-haired, white-bearded hermit stood face to face with each other.

But even as Ten-Ichi discovered them the old man leaped forward like a cat.

He seized the giant in his arms; he lifted him into the air; he held him there for a moment, and then he hurled the manlike-looking object straight into the gulf that yawned beneath them.

Ten-Ichi waited and listened.

A muffled shriek of terror came to him from the falling giant, and a moment later a dull crash from below came up to his ears as the giant struck the rocks; and after that all was still.

He saw the hermit fold his arms and step to the edge of the abyss, where he stood like a statue, gazing into the depths below; and then he sank upon his knees, and clasped his hands together with his face raised toward the sky as if he were praying.

Ten-Ichi dared not intrude upon this scene, so he waited; and after a long time the hermit rose from his knees and walked slowly back toward him.

"I knew that you were here," he said calmly. "I have asked God to forgive me for what I just did, and He has done so. The act was justified."

"If ever an act was justified that one was," replied Ten-Ichi.

The hermit was silent for a moment, and then suddenly he asked:

"You found the woman?"

"Yes."

"You have left her where you found her?"

"Yes."

"My son, she is my prisoner, and as such I shall claim her. She is a woman, and the most evil free. Come."

In silence they returned to the spot where Jane Gore was a prisoner, and in silence the hermit cut her bonds and told her to rise. Then he pointed up the cliffs toward the highway.

"Your way lies yonder," he said. "Your brother is dead. I killed him. It was God's wish. Go, woman! Go, and sin no more!"

Amazed, she looked at the strange man, and then without a word she turned away; but at a little distance she paused and called back:

"The young man who is wounded will recover. In an hour he will regain consciousness. He will soon be well. My brother assured me of that."

Then she turned away and disappeared.

Below in the glen they found the crushed figure of the mechanical giant, and inside it the body of Codman, as mentioned; and the hermit with rocks and stones crushed the metal giant into bits, after which he laid the body of the doctor aside, and with the remark that he would return and bury it, he again picked up the form of Patsy.

And so, somewhat later, they reached the highway, and there the hermit waited while Ten-Ichi hastened to the inn for a conveyance.

He found Nick Carter there, having just arrived in company with the father of Bertha Malden, and together they returned to the place where Patsy and the hermit were awaiting them.

But the strange hermit disappeared before he could be seen, and only Patsy was there to greet them, for consciousness had returned to him.

And so was ended the career of Doctor Codman, the poisoner.

THE END.

The next number, 517, of this weekly will be "Doris, the Unknown; or, Nick Carter's Blindfold Mystery."

ABOUT THE EARLY NUMBERS OF THE

TIP TOP WEEKLY

We receive from heads of letters every week from readers asking if we can supply the early numbers of Tip Top containing Frank's adventures. In every case we are obliged to reply that numbers 1 to 300 are entirely out of print. We would like to call the attention of our readers to the fact that the Frank Merriwell stories are being published in book form in the Medal Library are inclusive of these early numbers. The first book to appear was No. 150 entitled "Frank Merriwell's Schooldays." We also herewith a complete list of all the titles that have been published in book form up to the time of writing. We will be glad to send a fine colored catalogue of the Medal Library which is just filled with good things for boys, upon receipt of a one-cent stamp to cover postage.

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No.
150—Frank Merriwell's Schooldays.
167—Frank Merriwell's Chums.
178—Frank Merriwell's Foes.
184—Frank Merriwell's Trip West.
189—Frank Merriwell Down South.
193—Frank Merriwell's Bravery.
197—Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour.
201—Frank Merriwell in Europe.
205—Frank Merriwell at Yale.
209—Frank Merriwell's Sports Afield.
213—Frank Merriwell's Races.
217—Frank Merriwell's Bicycle Tour.
225—Frank Merriwell's Courage.
229—Frank Merriwell's Daring.
233—Frank Merriwell's Athletes.
237—Frank Merriwell's Skill.
241—Frank Merriwell's Champions.
245—Frank Merriwell's Return to Yale.
249—Frank Merriwell's Skates.
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